

SECESSION UNMASKED,

OR

AN APPEAL

FROM THE

MADNESS OF DISUNION

TO THE

SOBRIETY OF THE CONSTITUTION

AND

COMMON SENSE.

By A. J. CLINE.

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DEDICATED TO THE CITIZENS OF OUR WHOLE COUNTRY, AND ESPECIALLY TO THE  
OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS IN THE UNITED STATES SERVICE.

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*Fellow citizens and soldiers :*

A truly alarming and calamitous crisis has overtaken our beloved country. The beautiful fabric of government erected in this western world, once the admiration and hope of European nations, has been treacherously assailed by our own citizens, and the disgraceful spectacle is presented to mankind of a people, formerly prosperous and happy, standing, with scarcely any assignable cause, in open rebellion against the constitution and laws they have solemnly sworn to reverence and obey. The crisis is one over which thousands of noble and patriotic hearts are shedding tears of bitter agony. Let us endeavor, for a moment, to ascertain its foundation and history. The inquiry may teach us a lesson of wisdom which will be useful to ourselves and to our posterity.

We disclaim every act of rhetorical compliment when we say, that the men who first framed our admirable system of government achieved a measure of political wisdom, which did equal honor to their understandings and their hearts. An imperious step-dame had exercised towards them every species of intolerant and coercive subjugation, so as to compel them for a time to submit implicitly to a system of governmental tyranny. But this hard policy produced a very different effect on their minds from what was anticipated. Instead of reducing them to the condition of dependent vassals, it opened their hearts to the love of absolute freedom. Instead of crushing the spirit that was but humbly petitioning for the enjoyment of a just measure of social happiness, it imparted strength and expansion to resolutions that otherwise might have expired with the faint breath by which they were first attempted to be kindled. In the midst of their trials and difficulties, their increasing love of liberty became greater and greater. The very extremity of their troubles only served to sharpen their faculties, and to fit them for that glorious experiment of a new and rational form of civil polity, which was to gain the applause and approbation of the civilized world. Like the mineral that is found in the depth of the earth, their lustre shone the brighter the more it was exposed to the burning rays of an oppressive and tropical sun.



At last they were plunged by the injudicious zeal of a false parental policy into the attitude of revolutionary insurgents, struggling at the point of the bayonet for those just rights which were denied to their humble petitions. The contest they sought to avoid on the first occasion of complaint to their mother country, when fairly entered into, they regarded as a contest of life and death for the natural and inestimable rights of man. The anticipated result was equal to their highest expectations, and a young and inexperienced people beheld with admiration, at the end of the struggle, their arms completely triumphant, and their rights and liberty permanently established.

Nor must we overlook the superior statesmanship of our civil rulers. Never before, perhaps, in the history of the world, had a body of men, under similar circumstances, manifested a greater degree of coolness and circumspection—of calm, clear, dignified and patriotic deliberation. They arrived at their conclusions from a conscientious consideration of their own acts and intentions, as well as of the acts and intentions of the mother country, and having taken this stand against unauthorized usurpation, they piously committed the future issue to the God of battles. No one who even superficially reads our glorious Declaration of Independence, can help being struck by the force of its masterly arguments, the tone of its open and simple sincerity, and its profound but brief exposition of the rights and privileges of humanity. It is a state paper of universal obligation, adapted to no particular people and no particular age, but appealing to the feelings and sympathies of the people of all nations and of all times.

The Declaration of Independence proclaimed to the world the practical principles of a wise and efficient system of political justice. But it required another instrument to establish these principles on the immovable basis of a corresponding system of government. This was a task which our forefathers at first found it somewhat difficult to accomplish. Our Articles of Confederation partially failed in the ends they had in view. It was found necessary to frame a more perfect Constitution, and to define more clearly the rights to which individual States and individual persons were entitled. Let us never forget one of the prominent objects which this new Constitution especially aimed at accomplishing. That object was, as expressed in the Constitution itself, to form a more perfect union. It was soon discovered that the old Articles of Confederation did not work well; that the States were not cemented by ligaments that bound them together into one inseparable compact; that the General Government had too little power, and the individual States too much. The great object of the new Constitution was to establish, within its prescribed limits, an independent government, paramount and superior to all the rest, and to which all the rest were to be subservient and subordinate. In other words, the object of the Constitution was to give to the people of this young and rising republic a government and a union that should be lasting and inseparable; that should exercise a superintending control over all the others; that should inherently possess the power of defending and protecting itself against all foes, whether foreign or domestic; that should be able promptly to punish rebellion, wherever found; and that should command the respect and approval of the nations of the

earth. This much might be fairly learned from its plain and literal meaning. But much, too, was to be gleaned from its spirit and intention.

That this great instrument of political legislation, like the Declaration of Independence, was wisely framed by our leading statesmen, and honestly approved by the whole country, no one at the present day will have the hardihood to deny. That its objects were such as are represented above, has not only been attested by our own experience for more than three-quarters of a century, but has been practically acknowledged by the whole civilized world. It must be conceded at once that all nations, since the first foundation of our Union, have treated with us on the single consideration of our exercising all the powers of an efficient government, and that they never would have treated with us on any other consideration whatever. Our political relations with all countries involve the acknowledgement of this great truth, or else we have been an exceptional rule to one of the most obvious principles of the law of nations. A government is an independent sovereignty, existing as an entirety in its separate departments, and exercising an absolute and undivided control within its proper limits, over those who have given their consent to be governed. That consent once granted, unless changed by the free and voluntary approval of a majority of its citizens, must remain firm and irrevocable forever. It cannot be withdrawn by the whim or caprice of any individual, or any number of individuals. The Government cannot be destroyed by any course of proceeding disproportioned to the means which first called it into existence. It cannot be divided against itself, so long as its legitimate powers are not revoked by the authority which originally granted them. When it is first formed, it constitutes the people, who form it one nation. It cements together an alliance as strong and durable, as firm and inseparable, as the atoms which compose the solid structures of brass or marble. Nothing can reduce it to its original elements but the free volition of those, and of all those who created it.

The reason of this must be obvious to the plainest apprehension. What would a government be worth that might at any time be overturned by the mere arbitrary wishes and desires of the restless and disaffected? In what respect could a community of individuals be regarded as a nation, if the unity and oneness of that nation could be destroyed by the rebellious outbreak of some fragmentary part of it, predicated on a pretext of mere fancied validity, or on no pretext at all? What would the wise men who framed our Constitution have said, if they had been told that the solid structure of government which they had established to-day, might, by a whimsical change of sentiment on the part of a single State, be destroyed to-morrow? Was it for such an ephemeral and imaginary government as this that our forefathers exposed their lives, their liberties, and their fortunes, to the aggressive attacks of a relentless and unforgiving enemy? When they achieved their independence, and established that independence on the basis of constitutional law and order, they either ranked themselves among the nations of the earth, or they did not. If they did not, they could make no pretensions to national power or national greatness.



But if they did, then they proclaimed to the whole family of mankind that they, like the people of other countries, had established a government on a solid and durable foundation, which nothing but the consent of the governed, or the despotic rule of the governors, could destroy.

But it may be said that "ours is a government of peculiar formation, resting on the express grants contained in a written Constitution, and that its delegated persons may be revoked at any time by the parties to the original compact. The union of these States was entered into from considerations of mutual convenience and benefit, and its several members reserved to themselves certain rights which guaranteed to each of them a subordinate government, that might at any time be withdrawn from the confederacy, and be exercised as an independent sovereignty." This is the whole argument made use of by our Southern brethren, and the right of an individual State, or any number of individual States to secede from the Union without assigning any other cause than the mere exercise of voluntary choice, must depend on the solidity and truth of the argument. Let us endeavor to test its correctness by the obvious principles of the Constitution, and the dictates of reason and common sense.

We have already conceded the principle that all free governments are established for the benefit of the people, and that the people alone, that is, the whole people, possess the power of fundamentally altering the forms of government thus instituted for their benefit. This important truth constitutes one of the first and most prominent axioms of our Declaration of Independence. The language made use of by the enlightened framers of that celebrated instrument, will be found to read as follows: "That to secure the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, governments are instituted amongst men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness." This is a brief and comprehensive declaration of the principle of political liberty—a principle which all may understand, and to which every sensible mind will give its unhesitating assent.

There are two leading considerations involved in this important declaration. The first is, that any government may be abolished when it becomes destructive of the ends for which it was instituted; and the second is, that the force or authority necessary to accomplish this great purpose must proceed from the whole people for whose benefit the government ostensibly exists. It may be well enough to inquire how far these two considerations will be formed to bear on the alleged right of secession, which is now seeking to subvert the foundations of our government, and the glory and prosperity of our inestimable Union.

In what manner, fellow citizens and soldiers, has our government become subversive of the ends for which it was originally instituted? What liberty has it destroyed? What law has it violated? What privilege has it denied? What power has it abused? To what department of this government may we justly ascribe the least intention

of subverting our constitutional rights? In what particulars has our present, or any of our former executives attempted to interfere with these rights? Where is there a single instance of the national legislature enacting a law in derogation of the life, liberty, or happiness of the people? In what respect has the judicial department of our government willingly transcended the limits of the wise, sober, and equitable administration of justice? We ask in all sincerity that our brethren of South would point to that clause or section of the Constitution which has been directly or indirectly infringed or disregarded by the rulers of this great country. Let us have a fair and honest presentment of the offences laid to their charge. Show us the record. We will not attempt to evade it by any technical subtilty that so often disgraces political as well as judicial tribunals. We will hold the accused, in all respects, to the strict requirements of the law, and will disdain to secure them from the alleged criminality contained in the bill of indictment by any other means than a full and fair investigation of its merits.

It is utterly impossible that such a charge should be sustained, and this is just as well known to the leading advocates of secession as it is to ourselves. "But," say these misguided formers of rebellion amongst the people, "we do not complain of being exposed to any settled or systematic scheme of governmental tyranny. We cannot point to the passing of any law, or the perpetuation of any act, the object of which has been to deprive us of our just rights under the laws and Constitution of our country. Our disaffection to the government under which we have so long lived and prospered, is based on a feeling of disrespect, cherished by a portion of our fellow-citizens, for our peculiar institutions, and on the fraud regard we ourselves entertain for our sectional interests as distinct members of the great American family. The spirit of Northern Abolitionism is muttering in fearful tones its fanatical objurgations against us. A president has been elected whose principles are hostile to our domestic habits and manners. A congress has been elected whose legislation may interfere materially with the cherished schemes and established trade of our people. An increasing degree of Northern prejudice is arrayed against us. We are contemptuously spoken of by men who neither respect nor understand us. Our motives are misconstrued, and our characters are slandered. Exposed to injuries like these, our only alternative is to dissolve the ties which bind us together as a united people."

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to say that scarcely one of these alleged causes of complaint is founded in truth. There is no truth in the assertion that the feelings of the President are hostile to the feelings and institutions of the South. Neither have we just warrant for saying that the general sentiments of the Northern people are inimical to the rights and interests of their Southern neighbors. Such sentiments do indeed pervade the minds of a few fanatical leaders. It is but fair to acknowledge too that these leaders have been industriously employed in seeking to make converts to their own opinions, and in some instances their exertions have not been without success. But that success has been but partial and limited, and perhaps not one mind in fifty has been corrupted by the taint of their fanatical doctrines. The



overwhelming odds largely sympathizes with the feelings of our offended brethren in the South.

But let us suppose for a moment that the complaints uttered by our Southern fellow-citizens are true—that the President is really opposed in sentiment and feeling not only to the further extension of slavery, but to the very existence of that institution—that thousands of misguided people in the North are cherishing the same fanatical feelings—have been railed and slandered, and that the boldness and impudence of the Northern Abolitionists are well calculated to provoke the slaveholder to the very highest degree of exasperation. How will this serve to impart a different complexion to the erroneous principle of secession? Rebellion, at any time, and under any circumstances, ought to be a reluctant and an exceedingly cautious movement. “Prudence will dictate,” says our Declaration of Independence; “that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience has shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.” The truth of this sentiment must come home to the feelings of every sensible and reflecting mind. But what is the case in regard to the men who have rashly seceded from our glorious Union, and have sought to overturn what the wisest statesmen everywhere have esteemed the best government in the world? Had they any but a light and transient cause for their hasty and precipitate movement? Nay, had they any cause at all? Look at this terrible movement in the full exercise of that candor and concern which its great importance demands. Supposing the President, as we have said, professed and cherished the principles that we believe are falsely attributed to him. Supposing a large minority of the people of the North entertained the same principles. Would that be a sufficient cause for rebellion? Has there been any open aggressive act of unconstitutional authority exercised by either? Ought the government of the United States be made responsible for the private opinions of her chief magistrate, or for the private opinions of any number of her citizens? Where has been the open, persistent, and determined oppression that justified this rebellion? Was it ever heard of before that tyranny and oppression may be denounced by anticipation, and that treason may be founded on the conjectural hypothesis of what a government may become instead of the certain evidence of what it is already? Such a doctrine, if true, would effectually destroy every government under heaven. There would be no longer any security left for the repose and happiness of society. All the elements of anarchy and discord would be let loose on a suffering and disordered world.

But again, we all know that the Constitution under which we live was established by the people, and we have intimated above that the people alone are competent to the task of altering or abolishing it. The right to do this is an essential feature of every form of republican government, and this right must be exercised in a way corresponding to the means by which the government was originally established. Has it been done so in the wild attempt recently made to destroy the integrity and symmetry of our glorious Union? Were the people of



these United States, who framed and ratified our compact of government consulted on the great measure of reducing it to its primary elements? Let us, for the sake of the argument, yield an unqualified admission to what we must otherwise flatly deny, that a sufficient cause existed in the country for abrogating our fundamental law, and severing the ties which bound us together as one people. Was it competent for such a revolution to be brought about by a single individual, or a single State? Had South Carolina the right to constitute herself the sole umpire in deciding on a measure of such vast and overwhelming magnitude? Is it reasonable to say that her own self-willed presumption in seceding from the Union, constituted a legal warrant for all the other States to follow in her footsteps? The acknowledgment of such a doctrine would leave us without law, without authority, and without a government. It would reduce us to a pitiful association of petty independent sovereignties, where there would be no order, because there would be no controlling influence,—where there would be no strength, because there would be no union.

The great mistake undoubtedly, consists in according to each individual State, what belongs to the aggregate capacity of the entire people alone. It is assumed as an inferential maxim in our government, that, because certain rights were Constitutionally reserved to each separate State, and that because each separate State came into the Federal Union agreeably to its own consent, formally expressed in a written covenant, that therefore it may at any time resume its standing as an independent sovereignty, and peacefully withdraw its consent from the political compact into which it had so solemnly entered. But such an assumption we cannot help regarding as a rank political heresy. All governments are in the very nature of things, founded originally on the consent of the people. Nor does it make any difference whether this consent is expressed or implied—whether it was gradually yielded by the tacit agreement of its members, or was at once openly avowed by the more formal language of a written Constitution,—whether the parties to the same were only single and individual persons, or whether they were separate societies, having in a variety of particulars separate and distinct interests. The only question to be asked is, was the consent of the people originally given and obtained? When once that is done the government is forever established, and whether it consists of separate individuals or separate societies,—whether it has been created by an implied or a written Constitution,—it cannot be sundered or destroyed except by the free determination of the parties who formed it. Take the United Kingdom of Great Britain for instance. It consists of three distinct States or Territories, incorporated into a union by consent of the contracting parties, although this consent was not fully given until Scotland and Ireland had been subjugated by the overpowering conquests of the English nation. Supposing that Ireland should express a determination to secede from the other two, and should take up arms with the view to accomplish this purpose, and to form a separate government of her own. Would this be tolerated by the other parties to the compact? Would not the whole world pronounce such a movement rebellious and unconstitutional, although force was used in the first place to obtain an unwilling consent to the terms of the

contract? When a government has long existed by consent of the governed, no matter how it originated, is it not bound to see that every part of the National domain shall remain true to its loyalty and allegiance, and shall be subject to the superintending restraint, as well as to the superintending protection of the national authority? If this be the case when the consent of the governed has been reluctantly granted, with how much more force will the principle apply when that consent has been fully and voluntarily given from the commencement? In both cases the rule is enforced with a view to the peace and repose of society.

We have thus shown that not only was there no just cause for the extraordinary movements of our Southern brethren, but even if there had been, these movements were not brought about by the declared will of the whole people, the only authority which could legally and peacefully sanction them. Circumstances may happen indeed, in the history and experience of all governments, which will fully justify the most decided acts of rebellion, even when committed by only a fractional part of an oppressed and down-trodden people. But can it be said with the least shadow of propriety that this remark is applicable to the case in question? We might ask here, as we have done before, for the evidence of any systematic or wanton oppression—of any unjust or tyrannical misrule,—either on the part of the regular government, or any of its subordinate divisions belonging to the people. We are not sure that even the Fugitive Slave Law was ever attempted to be illegally evaded, or unconstitutionally abrogated. There may have been a few instances of this kind by single States, or single individuals. But who does not know that such attempts, even when seriously threatened and intended, must always fall short of the mischief aimed at by their perpetrators? With this fanatical incendiarism, however, if it existed at all, the general government had nothing to do. Nor was it ever supposed by any deliberate and reflecting mind that it could in a single instance materially impair the obligation of the laws, or weaken the purposes of justice. Every one knows that the moment an appeal could be made to the proper tribunal, the paramount majesty and force of the Constitution and laws would be vindicated, and a severe rebuke would be administered to the inconsiderate folly which attempted to disturb the repose of society. Every judicial decision asked for, had been rendered in favor of law and justice, and the popular voice in the North, in many instances, clamored loudly in defence of Southern rights, and the propriety of Southern conciliation, even in cases where our very sensitive brethren were sometimes asking for considerably more than an exact award of merit would have justly entitled them to.

It was not oppression, therefore, either on the part of the government or the people, of which the South had any just right to complain. Nor indeed did they ever attempt to make it appear that there was any direct or immediate interference by the government, or any persons connected with the government, in any institution, jurisdiction, or privilege, which they might claim as being peculiarly identified with their own section of country. The most they dared to say, was, that these rights had been threatened, and that if they were not in reality violated now, there was some danger that they might be violated here-



after. On this remote and uncertain contingency they persisted in founding all their complaints, until at last they succeeded in persuading themselves that they not only had a sufficient cause for discontent, but in reality had a proper excuse for a precipitate, wanton, and terrible rebellion. This brings us to the far most important part of the subject we have been discussing. We have readily seen the flimsy pretexts urged by ambitious men for overturning our government, and rending our happy Union asunder. But to be able to understand the notions for urging these pretexts is a task attended with much more difficulty—at least it is something much more important—for us to know, on the knowledge of which indeed the writer of these pages believes our political happiness essentially to depend. Let us, therefore, examine these motives with the attention which their great importance would seem to demand. On what principle has it happened that our Southern brethren have been so far blinded as to attempt to justify a rebellion that is founded on causes absolutely and wholly insufficient? By what powerful stimulus has their minds been so far corrupted, and their imaginations perverted, as to make them reconcile to their own consciences such a stupendous outbreak of folly, disorder, and wickedness?

The ruling principle of every unregenerate mind is, in a greater or less degree, a principle of selfishness. The evils of our nature are so radically perverse, that they often exist to a most alarming extent, even where their presence is least felt or suspected. They are so sly and stealthy in their approaches, that we are seldom in a situation to discover the ambush until we are effectually surrounded and taken prisoners by the enemy. As it is with individuals, so it is with communities and nations. The minds of our people have been gradually infected by this principle of selfishness, until our country has been over-run and almost ruined by it. This selfishness in the political world assumes the cunning and malignity of what is called party spirit. It is party spirit then which has been the fruitful source of all the evils under which we are now suffering, and it is against this formidable enemy of your political peace and happiness that the writer of this address would most affectionately warn you.

The first patriots of a country are perhaps always the sincerest and most exalted, as the first Christians were, certainly the purest and most holy. Washington entered on the administration of the affairs of our government, to which he had been called by unanimous vote of the people, with little or no apprehension of any immediate danger arising from party strife or social discord. He had for his assistants men of tried virtue and superior dignity. He had for his constituents the members of a recent and experimental organization, whose souls had been purified by the severe agitation of political tempests, and whose intellects had been sharpened by incessant contact with foreign enemies abroad, and with domestic enemies at home. The danger to be apprehended previous to that time, was not so much a danger springing from jealousy and discontent,—from cupidity and selfishness,—as a danger arising from the uncertain principles of an unsettled government. The moment these principles were agreed upon, and the government became permanently settled, that moment the danger was at an end, and the

people willingly and gladly shared with each other the blessings of mutual security and repose.

But Washington was a man whose insight into the secret workings of the human heart, formed a prominent part of his acquired knowledge, and the last pious effort of his patriotic life, was to warn his countrymen against the insidious aspirations and designs of party spirit. He seemed to be intuitively informed of the great danger arising from this source, more than from any other, and all his cherished love of country was drawn to a contemplation of this terrible evil. He saw it would be that, if any thing, which one day or other would destroy our political union, and render us powerless and impracticable as a nation. Hence he exhorted us to watch for the preservation of our union with jealous anxiety, and to discountenance whatever might suggest even a suspicion that it could in any event be abandoned.

For a time the advice of Washington was followed with filial reverence and regard, and every department of our country was correspondently prosperous and happy. But this favorable state of things was not destined long to continue. As the nation advanced in greatness and glory, designing politicians began to watch every opportunity of gratifying their selfish ambition, at the expense of much that was honorable and virtuous in the government. At first the ambitious aspirants were but few, and were not yet willing to make an entire surrender of their honor and dignity to the demon of cupidity and selfishness. Such was the temper and feeling of our public men during the administration of Mr. Jefferson. But gradually they grew more and more numerous, and as they increased in numbers they suffered themselves to grow more shamefully conspicuous in meanness, in cunning, and in profligacy. Parties were formed with the secret design of superseding and supplanting each other. Organizations were systematically got up for the purpose of achieving some concealed purpose of interest or ambition. At last these corrupt aspirants grew stronger and bolder. They insidiously infused their impure poison into the minds of the people, and having indoctrinated the masses with their own foul spirit of fraud and dishonesty, they openly declared that power and place in the government were acquisitions to be gambled and played for,—that “to the victors belong the spoils,”—and that however mean and degraded a man might become,—however far he might sink below the level of ordinary respectability in a calling or profession,—he was still good enough to be made a politician, and might successfully aspire to fill one of the highest places in the government.

Of course the Government was not left without the assistance and support of a few noble spirits, who had not bowed their knees to the demon of faction; who had not become the mercenary slaves of party organization and party dictation. It would have been the death blow of our political hopes, the winding sheet to the lifeless corpse of our murdered republic, if such a class of patriots had been wanting. There were men who stood, if not out of, at least far above the party corruption and party chaos by which they were surrounded. I trust in God, we may rightfully boast of such men yet. But they have been—I speak it to our everlasting dishonor—growing fewer and feebler ever since. Party tactics have assumed a bold, reckless, and



studied scheme of systematic misrule and importance in the nation, and every department of our Government has felt the paralyzing effects of an influence so corrupt and unholy. The spirit of party is the vital breath in which demagogues have a spasmodic existence, corrupting and disordering all things by the unprincipled and frantic violence which usually marks their course. Their leading motto, although in a somewhat different sense from that which governs wiser and better men, is "divide and conquer." If parties do not exist ready made to their hands, they call into requisition every means within their power to give permanency and effect to those of their own making. If legitimate causes of separation and division are wanting, they proceed forthwith to manufacture them out of their own brains, and for their own purposes, and to this end they labor with all their might to convince the people that their very existence as a nation depends on a single measure of doubtful policy, or a single principle of vague and indistinct importance. Once the grand problem of separation and dispute was for or against a protective tariff. On another occasion the odious watchword was for or against a United States Bank. An infinite variety of other standards have successively been erected, from which each of the antagonistic parties, professing all the while to be exceedingly friendly to the interests of the dear people, promulgates its shibboleths of hostile proscription or friendly affiliation. The present fruitful apple of discord is slavery, a subject which has been gradually looming larger and larger to the public view, just in proportion as it has been belabored and tortured by partizan leaders, until in all its leading ramifications it is made to assume an appearance of wide and perplexing difficulty, while its real dimensions may be taken in with ease by the simplest and plainest understanding.

We have said that a favorite motto of these partisan leaders is, "divide and conquer." God defend us against a principle which, as understood by these men, is fraught with destruction and death to the vital existence of our republican institutions. The principle of secession is the operation of this doctrine in a new and most dangerous form, involving in its terrible consequences all the evils of anarchy, malignity, and disorder. This unhappy state of things cannot be justly charged to the deliberate choice of the people at large. But for the political sophistry and promptings of their partisan leaders, the people would have remained faithful to their oaths of allegiance, faithful to the Union, and faithful to themselves. They would have freely shed their life's blood in opposing the first profane step that would have dared to trample on the American flag and the American Constitution. But their leaders were men of different tempers and of different characters. They had long been inured to the disgraceful machinations and dissensions of political warfare. They had long aspired to a selfish superiority in a country of democratic plainness and republican equality. They had long viewed the growing prosperity of their northern fellow citizens with distrust and jealousy. They had long wished for some plausible pretext to render the breach between contending factions wider and wider, so that they might at last assume the powers and prerogatives of an independent community, and revel in the spoils not only of a sundered and vanquished party,

but of a dissevered and distracted country. At length the crisis came. "Divide and conquer" was again the unprincipled watchword by which these political demagogues sought to accomplish their selfish purpose. But this time their unscrupulous injunction had a more terrible meaning. It aimed at the disintegration of our vast republic. It urged the dismemberment and destruction of our young but powerful Government. It openly advocated the dissolution of our happy Union.

And now, alas! our glorious Union has indeed been shaken to its foundations. The same spirit that at first only divided parties and factions, has most cruelly divided our beloved country. Patriotism weeps over the broken fragments of a mutilated and despised Constitution. Loyalty weeps over the sad spectacle of a disaffected and alienated people. The whole world is alarmed at the threatened downfall of republican liberty and intelligence in this western hemisphere. But let us not timidly yield to the weak suggestions of discouragement and despair. The proud fabric of our Government has been basely attacked, but it has not been irreparably injured. There are thousands and millions of patriotic hearts beating high in the cause of constitutional rights and constitutional supremacy. There are thousands and millions of brave men busy in gathering up the dispersed fragments of the temple of liberty, which, when brought together will form a structure more beautiful and more solid than ever. You, fellow citizens and soldiers, have the high honor of being engaged in this blessed work. On you devolves the double task of first restoring the proud edifice of political light and knowledge, which disloyal traitors have sought to overthrow, and afterwards of defending it from future attacks proceeding from the same cause. You are battling nobly for the flag under which our fathers fought and achieved their independence. You are fighting nobly for the laws and Constitution of your country. But you have another duty to perform, which in its consequences is not less momentous and important. When peace shall be restored to our bleeding country—when you shall have re-established the boundaries and blessings of the Union—forget not the obvious causes which so disgracefully led to its dissolution. Resolve at once to discard from amongst yourselves all party spirit. Determine to acknowledge no longer any difference between the words republican and democrat. Regard that man as your political enemy who would continue to urge these distinctions. Remember that their inevitable tendency is, not only to alienate the affections of friends and brothers from each other—not only to corrupt and demoralize the human heart—but, as you have fearfully experienced, to overturn the best of governments, and to encourage bad and ambitious men to found their anticipated greatness on the ruins of their country. Let us fondly exclaim with Mr. Jefferson, "we are all republicans—we are all democrats!" In seeking to redress the wrongs your country has suffered, you have forgotten for a time your party separations, and of course you fight all the better for having forgotten them. So when you return to the pursuits of civil life would you prosper the better for the same reason. Let me urge you, by every noble feeling and affection you cherish for your beloved country, not only to forget your party hostilities for a time, but to forget them forever.



I know it is sometimes said that parties are a wholesome check on each other, and are necessary to the health and vigor of a republican form of government. But this is one of those plausible arguments invented by cunning men in order to practice with the greater degree of impunity their shameful acts of duplicity and wickedness. Two parties can only serve the pernicious purpose of inflaming and corrupting each other. They are no more conducive to the general welfare of the body politic than war and pestilence, when brought together, are conducive to the general repose and health of society. They are no more salutary as counteracting agents in the conflict of moral good and evil, than hunger and contagion are salutary as neutralizing properties in the conflict between health and disease. They are found, on the contrary, mutually to aggravate and increase each other's destruction and violence. This we learn from every day's experience. Just in proportion as party spirit runs high, venality, corruption and disorder infect every department of our political organization.

But you have still further services to perform, in order to promote the lasting welfare and happiness of your suffering country. The moment that peace is restored, there will be occasion for a judicious amendment, in one or two particulars, of our matchless Constitution. This ought to be done readily and promptly, and with a marked degree of wise and prudent circumspection. It may be necessary to define, with greater precision than has heretofore been done, the respective pretensions to certain exclusive peculiarities belonging both to the North and the South. Amongst these, the most prominent and important, of course, will be the institution of slavery, an institution guaranteed to our southern brethren by a solemn provision of the Constitution, and which it was never intended should be interfered with by any hostile authority exercised by the general or any of the State governments. We do not mean to say that that influence has in any substantial manner been already exercised. But our southern fellow citizens have complained, and perhaps have not complained without cause, of our language and sentiments so freely and so gratuitously expressed on this subject—of our eager and officious intermeddling in that which did not politically concern us, and which was seriously calculated to provoke their anger and resentment. Ought we not to pause for a moment, and think whether there is not some reason to question the wisdom and propriety of our own conduct? They rebelled, it is true, without cause. But is not a reasonable allowance to be made on account of the alleged provocation—on account of that disorder of the imagination which our own imprudence had some agency in exciting? Such inquiries should regulate our temper and feelings, if not towards their leaders, at least towards the great mass of those who have been so dreadfully imposed on by these leaders. They are politically brethren with us, under the protection and government of the same great republic, and the moment they return to their duty, our first object ought to proclaim aloud our ardent desire to secure them in the full enjoyment of their political rights, and to establish these on the firm basis of a constitutional guarantee.

Another subject of immense interest to the political and civil welfare of our country, is connected with the extravagant expenditure of

our public revenue, and the corruption which there is too much reason to fear has been gradually tainting, more and more, the minds of our public men. Much of this corruption may be fairly attributable to the prevalence of that party spirit which we have taken occasion to reprehend above, and which has been so fearfully undermining the purity and stability of our political institutions. Where politics is made a trade, all the arts of an illicit traffic will be naturally resorted to for the purpose of benefiting the individual engaged in the disgraceful calling. How far these abuses are susceptible of amendment by Constitutional enactment, may become matters of serious inquiry to those who shall be entrusted with the task of reforming them. Some of them might certainly be reached in this manner. One of the very worst,—one that has done more than any other, as we verily believe, to distract our public councils, and waste our public treasure,—one which is anti-democratic and anti-republican in every aspect in which it can be viewed, is that feature in the administration of our government which gives to our representatives in Congress the right of fixing a proper allowance for their own services, and constituting themselves the sole umpires of the amount of compensation to which they are entitled. Every public servant, as any other laborer in the common affairs of life, is undoubtedly worthy of his hire. But no one can fail to see at a glance, that where men have the right to regulate the time during which their public services are to continue, as well as the amount of their compensation for these services, no matter how dignified these men may be supposed to be in their characters and standing before the public, they will be strongly tempted to betray the trust which has been so liberally confided to them. This is made evident to us every day by the abuse of the franking privilege. And precisely the same fact may be inferred from the long, protracted, and tedious duration to which, formerly, the sessions of Congress every other year were extended. May we not reasonably believe, that with a fair compensation for the needed services of our representatives at Washington, secured to them by some competent and independent organ of the government, our public business would be better done, and, what would be of almost equal benefit to the country, would be done in a much shorter time? It will be admitted by the great majority of the intelligent citizens of our country, that if we had less talking on our floors of Congress, we should most certainly be placed under the enjoyment of better laws.

Our Constitution undoubtedly meant, as I have endeavored to show above, to guarantee to all the States the equal benefits of a perpetual Union. But as some of our Southern friends affect to question this position, an explanatory clause should be incorporated in the original instrument which would leave no one the slightest pretence for advocating a different doctrine. The perpetuity of the Union should be declared to be, what it really is, the corner stone on which our government rests, and the essential life of our political existence, which none should be suffered to touch or violate with profane hands. It was the very first blessing which our fathers attempted to secure to us after they had established their independence. It is the very last that should be surrendered by their children.